CPS HR CONSULTING

City of Fargo

Employee Engagement Survey Comments

Fargo Public Library

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SUBMITTED BY:
CPS HR Consulting
www.cpshr.us

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What is one thing you would recommend to make your Department a better place to work?

1. Encourage work/life scheduling flexibility, especially in positions that aren't emergency personnel or dealing directly with the public.
2. Support from the city of safety issues around downtown.
3. Less silos in our dept. & 2.) Options for hybrid work (Work from home and in the office) across my dept. for the positions that are able to do that.
4. more bike parking for employees
5. There is room for improvement in the library's interdepartmental communication and culture. There can be an unhealthy tension/hostility between library departments, which leads to information siloing and culture issues. I believe in the library's mission and vision statements (I feel that library leadership does as well), but we are often forced to be reactive rather than proactive. I feel as though we are constantly 'putting out fires' rather than working toward the future. As the largest public library in North Dakota, I envision us as leaders in the state, but it often feels like we are just keeping up at best, moving backwards at worst.
6. I feel that my department is doing a great job at making the work feel as impactful as possible, as well as making it a fun and safe place to work. I know if I am ever struggling or need reassurance, there are people there for me.
7. Raise the starting pay for library staff. COLA raises that reflect the inflation rate, and lower costs for benefits for part time staff.
8. My dept within my dept is great, the only thing I would recommend is more communication and understanding as a dept as a whole.
9. Supervisor can be too harsh for minor failings--Never gives praise no matter how good a job I do
10. Improving workplace support for neurodivergent employees would go a long way. To create a more inclusive and supportive work environment (that isn't burning out your employees), supervisors must better understand neurodivergent employees—those of us with conditions like Autism, ADHD, and other non-apparent disabilities. We often face unique challenges and require tailored support. Traditional management approaches geared toward neurotypical employees are typically ineffective, so it's essential to recognize and adapt to different motivational and communication styles. Key strategies to enhance success and well-being: - Lead with empathy and understanding - Offer flexibility and choice in work arrangements - Focus on strengths and use positive reinforcement - Communicate expectations clearly and give constructive feedback - Foster an inclusive culture that promotes psychological safety - Establish transparent processes for accessing accommodations - Acknowledge the extra burden of the accessibility/disability tax

- Address the ongoing failed practices that are contributing to burnout and mental health decline in our neurodivergent staff

11. Overall security taken seriously.
12. Recognizing that there is a lot of talent out there without Master's degrees and be willing to hire them.
13. I think my department I work in is great--I feel supported by my department's admin and my managers. The only thing that would make my department a better place to work is more support from city admin and commissioners... at least acknowledgement from them that the work we do is valued and that all of the incidents we have with the public aren't falling on deaf ears.
14. Creating a culture where people feel comfortable sharing different viewpoints without fear of being misunderstood or labeled would help improve our work environment. More open, balanced dialogue would strengthen collaboration and make our department more welcoming to everyone.
15. Paying our part time staff better! Many of them have been here a long time. The reclass process seems to have disappeared.
16. more job classifications, room to grow and be promoted -we're big enough we could have Librarian I and IIs, and more levels of Circ Management reflected with job classifications, right now people are doing a lot of duties beyond their classification and not getting compensated for it. This causes burnout, with no hope for promotion.
17. For administration to put more weight on the requests and opinions from staff
18. Regular reviews of the top three positions, adequate budgets.
19. My leadership team has one bad egg that effects everything, which made the answers about leadership hard to answer.
20. Hire people who are physically able to do the job.
21. There sometimes seems to be a disconnect between dept leaders and the rest of the dept. I think this is partially because they're spread so thin that it's A) hard for them to get the time and space they need to discuss things and come to decisions (and remember to pass things on) and B) they perhaps don't have the bandwidth to support the amount of patience they need to have constructive discussions with each other/working through disagreements to find good solutions to issues. Information silos are proving difficult to knock down across the board.
22. I think an increased security presence at the Main Library would make it a better place to work.
23. The library would be a better place to work if they acknowledged that most of our staff have to work undesirable hours. A nice step would be if they paid employees more while working those undesirable hours (weekends and nights/after 5pm shifts). They made a good step towards this by closing on Sundays.

24. For City administration to give us the staff we've requested.
25. Fewer silos/cliques among the various work units within the department which have led to disparaging comments about colleagues
26. Some more security at the library would be appreciated. As one of the few city departments that deals with the public, it would be great to have funds allocated to safety instead of hearing about plans to build another building in the cramped downtown area. A little extra pay to keep entry level employees from leaving would be great as well.
27. More staff so that we aren't spread so thin.
28. Sometimes it feels like we have become too complacent with the work we do. Like that we know the mission of the department, but we are unable to articulate its importance to the City. I think that giving us some communication resources would help us to speak on our aligned missions with the City.
29. More transparency when it comes to decision-making. This is something we have struggled with for a long time as a department. It is difficult to know if the leaders in our department are truly considering the opinions and ideas of staff when it comes to making changes. We have tried to implement documenting changes, and some leaders in the department are onboard, but not all of the department leadership appears to think of providing updates or explaining the process behind major decisions. It would be nice to feel informed and like we are part of the process. Things often feel a little precarious without having that interaction from department leadership.
30. Politically, I swing Conservative in values. There is a LOT of negativity towards Conservative thought openly discussed regularly which makes it hard to be open in my own thoughts at times. This is frustrating and somewhat alienating

Please share any additional feedback:

31. I absolutely LOVE my job and my department. We work well together, despite our differences. I believe we try hard to achieve our goals and I feel our leadership team from the director down believes in what we do and supports us wholly.
32. I speak to every employee I can. I speak to people not just in my department but across different departments where my friends work. There is burn out spreading, like a disease. I don't know if it something that would be simple to fix, but a lot of us are tired of seeing co-workers move on because they found better opportunities elsewhere.
33. Many of us have gone through the pandemic as city employees. It was an intense time, and the stress was frequently counter-productive. But how the library staff were treated during 2020-2022 serves as an example of how we were viewed seemingly as disposable by other city staff. The former library office manager asked about where to source KN95 masks when a new variant caused all the public health agencies to make statements urging people to up the quality of the masks they were using. In response, the former safety manager replied that KN95 masks were too expensive to give to library staff. When rotated, KN95 masks are good for 40 hours. Even if used at twice that rate -- 2 per week--at 80 cents a piece and using 100 per year, library staff--in terms of preventing illness, long-term disability, or increased incidence of strokes--we were not viewed as being worth 80 bucks to the City. Some of the players have since changed; I look for a sea change in attitude toward library employees as well.
34. On the whole, I believe that the City administration works hard to keep the everything functioning for the public and staff. It does seem though, that given recent events and my experiences over the course of my career here, that there is some core dysfunction at the heart of some of the City's issues.
35. A lot of people at the library who are contracted part time 20-29 hours work over 30 hours a week pretty consistently so it would be nice if there was an option to be contracted full time 30-39.
36. Trust in city admin is pretty low right now. Firstly, last fall when Fire and Police were lobbying for the tax that would give them more pay (which by the way isn't a sustainable way to support such an increase), they threw other depts under the bus with lies about what money or other benefits or expansions we were being given, and there was no attempt by the city to set that record straight. Ask yourself also: why would they think it's better to fight against their fellow city coworkers who are suffering the same payment issues rather than tackling the problems that are causing said issues? What impression was the city giving them? Second: The budget cuts that the city is dealing with are terrible, and I sympathize with the hard decisions that had to be made. And yet. No word from anyone on how they're going to make sure this doesn't happen again. Not even a first step. Tell us how you're going to get started! Otherwise, how can we be sure our jobs

are even going to be here next time around? And also by the way. How does it look to you that many of the cuts made are programs for the most vulnerable in society? The Engagement Center? Public Health? Youthworks? And - Juneteenth and MLK Jr day were the two holidays you cut? Really, how are people supposed to interpret that? Third: Everything that's going down in Comms. Working in a dept that is not in city hall, this has made it very clear to the rest of us that there are few people there worried about working together instead of worrying about their own skin. Everyone's jockeying for power and taking their stress out on everyone else by throwing blame or just bulldozing over others. Stop it. STOP. My dept works with the public every day, literally talking to people from all backgrounds day in and day out. It's a good reminder of what our work is actually for. Tangible evidence that even the small things we do can ripple into larger consequences, for good or ill. That doing what we can to help each other actually relieves stress because it better shares the burden of the important work we all do. A couple years ago the part of my dept I work in, that is our small leadership group over our section, we got together and said aloud, agreed openly and plainly with each other, that our work culture had become so vile from the continuing aftershocks of the pandemic and a coworker that harassed people for years and HR did nothing about, that we had to make bettering our culture a priority. There would never be a perfect time, so we had to MAKE time. We had to PRIORITIZE it. And you know what? Even though we're only able to sit down and have real discussions about it every few months, we've made progress. Real progress. And that can happen when you all decide to actually work together and learn and take action and better yourself, too, instead of making shallow noises about this and that. I'm begging you to actually make time and do it. Please. What you do not only affects the large amount of people that work for the city, but EVERYONE in the city itself. Keep that in mind if you feel like shying away from the work and time it's going to take. Please. I promise there are people who will want to do the work with you.

37. The city seemed much more promising 10 years ago.
38. The library is the face of the city for a large number of Fargo and area residents and is largely ignored and deprioritized by city administration. Not only does that make our jobs harder, it is also extremely disheartening. We have a very good library and supporting the library is an easy win for city leaders
39. Lip service about how great city employees are doesn't go very far when the employees are continually being asked to do more with less.
40. I want to add that my department is truly fantastic. Compared to other workplaces I've been in, this is by far the most supportive and least dramatic environment I've experienced. I really appreciate the team I get to work with every day.
41. While I would hope that this feedback leads to positive action, I am admittedly skeptical. Despite the frequent use of the "Team Fargo" phrasing in City-wide emails and communications it feels hollow as the organization seems to care more about hierarchy, clout-chasing, and performative

superficial acts than things like employee well-being or actually serving the needs of those most marginalized in our community.

42. Can't think of anything
43. I also would recommend looking at compensation holistically. While I am satisfied with my compensation, I believe there are positions within the department that are overlooked and underpaid, and the internal process to review compensation is ineffective and not transparent for staff. An example of the city internal process's lack of transparency: In recent years (either 2022 or 2023), paperwork was submitted to reclassify the Library Associate I position. This paperwork was submitted because the Library Associate I's job description and pay grade rating are outdated and do not accurately reflect the position's growing responsibilities within the department. The paperwork was submitted well before the deadline, but library leadership waited months to hear any feedback from HR. The response was that the reclassification process was being reworked and the already submitted reclassification requests were not being considered. The reclassification paperwork remains unavailable on the Intranet portal as of 9/2/2025.
44. this survey was kind of junk and I hope it was not too expensive
45. There are certain departments within the City that have a lot of positions in the lower pay grades that work directly with the public and handle challenging/stressful situations. These positions should be paid more, but with the current pause on reclassification requests, there is no avenue for change. While a COLA is appreciated, it doesn't address the disparity in pay between departments. Obviously the City is experiencing increased budget constraints which makes pay increases challenging, but when our pay isn't competitive within the area we see increased turnover, dissatisfaction, and burnout. We lose people with institutional knowledge and experience that impacts how successful we are at fulfilling our mission.
46. There should be better accountability at all levels, but especially at the administrative level. Annual reviews and exit interviews seem mostly pro forma and do not generate real feedback or follow up or seem to impact how pay and promotions are assigned.